



The United States Mission to the OSCE

Office of Public Affairs

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His Eminence William Cardinal Keeler, 14th Archbishop of Baltimore

William Henry Keeler was born March 4, 1931 in San Antonio, Texas, the son of Thomas L. Keeler and Margaret T. (Conway) Keeler. He was raised in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, where he attended St. Mary School and Lebanon Catholic High School. He received a B.A. from St. Charles Seminary, Overbrook, Philadelphia, in 1952 and a Licentiate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in 1956.

Ordained a priest on July 17, 1955 in the Church of the Holy Apostles, Rome by Archbishop (and future Cardinal) Luigi Traglia, the young cleric became assistant pastor at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Marysville, and secretary of the diocesan Tribunal (1956-1958). He was then assigned to study Canon Law at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. In 1961, he received his doctorate in Canon Law and was reappointed by Bishop George L. Leech as assistant pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church. At the same time he was named Defender of the Bond of the diocesan Tribunal. In 1964, he was appointed pastor of the Marysville parish.

As secretary to Bishop Leech during the Second Vatican Council meetings in Rome (1962-1965), he was appointed peritus or "special advisor" to the Council by Pope John XXIII. During the Council, he also served on the staff of the Council Digest, a daily communication service sponsored by the United States Bishops.

In 1965, he was appointed to serve as Vice Chancellor of the Harrisburg Diocese and, in time, Chancellor (1969) and later Vicar General. He held the latter position when he was named Auxiliary Bishop of Harrisburg and Titular Bishop of Ulcinium (Dulcigno) by Pope John Paul II on July 24, 1979. His episcopal ordination occurred on September 21, 1979, at St Patrick Cathedral, Harrisburg.

On September 3, 1983, he was elected Administrator of the Diocese of Harrisburg by the College of Consultors following the death of Bishop Joseph T. Daley. Pope John Paul II appointed him Bishop of Harrisburg on November 10, 1983, and he was installed as Bishop on January 4, 1984, by His Eminence John Cardinal Krol, Archbishop of Philadelphia.

He was appointed Archbishop of Baltimore by Pope John Paul II on April 11, 1989, and was formally installed as 14th Ordinary of the nation's oldest See on May 23 in ceremonies at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen. Prior to his assignment in Baltimore, he was Bishop of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, from 1983-1989 and had served in the Harrisburg diocese since 1956.

Cardinal Keeler was appointed to the College of Cardinals by Pope John Paul II on November 28, 1994. The Consistory ceremony took place in the Pope Paul VI Audience Hall, Vatican City State. The Cardinal currently serves on the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

An influential participant in a wide range of national and international issues, Cardinal Keeler was elected President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and the United



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States Catholic Conference in November 1992. He had been elected as the organizations' Vice President in November of 1989, when he hosted Baltimore's bicentennial celebration of the

founding of America's first Roman Catholic diocese. He is also Chairman of the Maryland Catholic Conference, Chair of the Board and Chancellor of St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, as well as of Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg.

As part of his work with the NCCB, Cardinal Keeler developed a reputation for effectively building interfaith bonds. He is particularly noted for his work in furthering Catholic-Jewish dialogue and serves as moderator of Catholic-Jewish relations for the USCCB. He has been a member of the International Catholic Orthodox Commission for Theological Dialogue since 1986. As Chair of the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs from 1984 to November 1987, he helped arrange the Pope's meetings with Jewish leaders in Miami and with Protestant leaders in Columbia, S.C., during the 1987 papal visit. The Archbishop was appointed to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in the summer of 1994, and to the Congregation for the Oriental Churches in November 1994. From 1998-2001 and again since November 2003, he has served as Chair for the Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

Since coming to Baltimore, one of Cardinal Keeler's priorities as leader of the oldest Catholic See in the United States has been the strengthening of the Catholic school system. He also has been a vigilant leader of the pro-life movement and an outspoken advocate for expanded evangelization throughout the parish community. In 1992 the Cardinal initiated the Lenten Appeal, a giving campaign that to date has raised nearly \$45 million in support of area Catholic schools, the needs of the less fortunate, and a variety of spiritual development efforts.

He is the President of the American Division Catholic Near East Welfare Association, and Chair of the Black and Native American Missions Board. He serves on the Boards of The Catholic University of America; the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington; and Mount St. Mary's College. He is Chairman of the Board of Catholic Charities, the largest non-governmental agency providing assistance to the needy of Maryland. He is president of the Cathedral Foundation and publisher of The Catholic Review.

Honorary degrees: Lebanon Valley College; Mount St. Mary's; Gettysburg College; Susquehanna University; Gannon University, Erie, Pennsylvania; Loyola College, Baltimore; St. Mary's College of Minnesota, Winona, Minnesota; Shippensburg State University, Pennsylvania; Elizabethtown College, Pennsylvania; University of Notre Dame, South Bend; Ateneo University, Philippines; College of Notre Dame of Maryland, Baltimore, Franciscan University, Steubenville, Ohio; and Viterbo University, La Cross, Wisconsin.